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LESSONS FROM JACOB'S EXPERIENCE AT BETHEL

By FATHER SMITH, S.S.J.E.

(A sermon preached at the Church of Saint John the Evangelist, Boston, on the Feast of the Dedication, Sunday, October 4, 1953.)

"How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

(Genesis 28:17)

DESIRING to worship God in a place where orthodox trinitarian theology would be both taught and believed, a group of devout Congregationalists, erected and dedicated a granite meeting house on Bowdoin Street, one hundred and twenty-two years ago. This morning you and I find ourselves in that same edifice. To be sure, many drastic alterations have been made in the interior of this building since the year 1831, and events of history have twice changed the name of the edifice, first to "The Church of the Advent" and, seventy years ago, to its present dedication — the Church of Saint John the Evangelist. It is the dedication of this building as a house of God for the promulgation and practice of the full Faith of the Church that we commemorate at this Solemn Mass.

The opening words of today's Mass, the words of the Introit, are taken from the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis. "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God. and this is the gate of heaven." This devotional affirmation was first uttered by Jacob in response to a moving theophany experienced in the course of his journey from Canaan to Padan-aram. Pausing in the wilderness of Luz for a night's rest he gathered stones to serve as a pillow. In the course of his sleep he dreamed that he saw a ladder mounting heavenward on which angels ascended and descended and atop which stood God Himself promising manifold blessings. On awaking Jacob was filled with awe and fear but he "rose up early", renamed the site "Bethel" meaning "the house of God", and rededicated Himself to the loyal service of the Lord.

Now why, it may be asked, does the Church first direct our thoughts to this incident from Hebrew folklore as we gather to keep the Feast of the Dedication? Does she desire that we derive from Jacob's experience at Bethel certain lessons to guide our own thoughts and actions? That would seem to be a reasonable conclusion and so we turn this morning to attempt an interpretation of the meaning of the picturesque incident in the wilderness of Luz.

Lessons from Jacob's Experience at Bethel

The first lesson we learn is that God reveals His Presence to those who earnestly seek it and strive for personal holiness. Jacob was granted the vision of God because he was longing for it. He would not have been permitted to share in such an experience had he possessed no spiritual desires. Had he not been yearning for the high and holy, had he possessed no determination to break with his sinful past, he would never have witnessed the vision of angels and the Lord of the angels. Because his will was directed Godward he was able to look through the portals of heaven to the beatific vision.

A devoted priest whose services were always poorly attended was once asked derisively, "Well, Parson, how many did you have at Mass today?" To that mocking query he replied, "Millions!" He said, "millions" and he meant just that because whenever he recited the words of the Preface, "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name", he believed that a cloud of heavenly witnesses surrounded him at the altar.

Do you believe that? Are you so tied to earth that the words of the liturgy are to you meaningless sounds? If your participation in worship does not inspire and uplift you so that you experience God's Presence it is clear that your heart and soul and mind are not really directed towards God and that you require more training in the fundamentals of the art of holiness. In the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5.8), our Lord is warning us that those whose motives are mixed or tainted will be deprived of spiritual consolation. And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews urges us to "follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord". (Hebrews 12:14.)

Now where are we to learn about that essential holiness? In one place only, and that is in the house of God. The psalmist sings, "Thy testimonies, O Lord, are very sure: holiness becometh thine house for ever". (Psalm 93.6.) We dedicate a church in order to make it a hallowed site, a meeting place between God and man. A Church is a holy place because it belongs to the Holy One. In this building holy words rise before God in prayer and praise. In this building holy things are ministered to God's children empowering them to become holy. In this building holy words are read from Holy Scripture to guide men's steps along the path which leads heavenward. This is indeed the gate of heaven. This is the school of sanctity in which to learn how to seek for and find the Presence of God.

The second lesson which we learn from Jacob's experience is, that though our sins dull our vision, our penitence and God's merciful pardon can restore our spiritual sight. On realizing that he stood at the gate of heaven in ancient Bethel, Jacob was afraid and exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place!" Confronted by the heavenly vision he reacted just as Isaiah was later to do in the Temple at Jerusalem. The prophet, seeing God and hearing the seraphic choir could merely cry out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips". (Isaiah 6:5.) Jacob, seeing a like vision, was afraid. Both men feared because the vision of divine holiness convicted them of their own sinfulness. Jacob recalled the heinous deceit which he had exercised towards his father and brother. The pathetic entreaty of Esau his brother to Isaac their father, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father" (Genesis 27:38) still haunted Jacob. So, face to face with God, he felt reproached, and ashamed.

Thus it is with us likewise, brethren. We come before the Presence of God to worship Him but holy imagery and holy sounds soon convict us of our sinfulness and we call upon the Most High to ask for cleansing in order that we may not blaspheme His Holy Name. What wisdom and understanding the Church displays in placing at the beginning of the liturgy the Kyrie, the heartfelt cry for mercy, "Lord have mercy upon us."

Our sins alienate us from God. By them we create an iron curtain between our souls and God. And yet the wonderful fact remains that as soon as we come to ourselves and turn, God is ever at hand to tear down that barrier. Genuine repentance always wins pardon and peace. No matter how grievously one may have sinned, whenever the plea, "God be merciful to me a sinner" wells up from a contrite heart God bountifully bestows His mercy and loving-kindness. Whenever we provide clear evidence of contrition through humble confession the Father of mercies opens the floodgates of forgiveness and we discover that sins repudiated may, like another Jacob's ladder, help us to climb the steep ascent into the very Presence of the Lord our God.

To those men and women who need Him most God is ever near as He eagerly awaits the first sign of their repentance. The incident at Bethel announces to all who repent that God appears to them to grant them absolution, to strengthen them, to lead them along better paths, and to dismiss them with the loving warning, "Go, and sin no more". All this love is, never, of course, the fruit of our deserving. Who of us would have even the slightest glimpse of the beatific

vision if we received that which we deserved? Forgiveness and restoration come solely through the mercy of God. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us." (Titus 3:5.) And God makes this whole experience of contrite confession and merciful pardon available to every one of us, over and over again, in His holy house.

The third lesson to be derived from Jacob's experience is the truth that God tabernacles Himself among men on this earth. When Jacob, seeking God's Presence, had repented and been assured of forgiveness, then he could dedicate a tabernacle to the Almighty. Taking the stone which he had used as a pillow he made this vow: "If God will be with me . . . then shall the Lord be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house". (Genesis 28:20-22.)

Similarly we take stones, placing them one upon another and then dedicate the completed pile calling upon our God to come and dwell there as our divine Guest. By its dedication a church is solemnly separated from all the dwellings of men and yet the stones themselves are unchanged. The Feast of the Dedication does not merely commemorate the erection of a building which must ever remain devoid of feeling and life. The Feast rather commemorates living realities. It reminds us, as the Epistle suggests, that we ourselves are to be "living stones" building up a spiritual house. God accepts our house of stone and under the shelter of the material building he invites us to participate in living mysteries which aid us to become precious stones in His holy Eyes.

We recognize, of course, that Almighty God has no need of a building of stone in which to dwell. "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" says the Book of Acts. (Acts 7:48.) And Isaiah writes, "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me?" (Isaiah 66:1.) God possesses only one sanctuary which is worthy of Him, namely His own divine life. And yet this divine life, which can never be circumscribed, is communicated to each one of us causing us to become partakers of the divine nature.

Since it is God's delight to dwell among and in the children of men we are like churches. Each one of us is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Each one of us is, in a certain sense, a tabernacle in which our Lord Jesus Christ reserves His Body and Blood in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Christ calls us to be bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh forming one body with Him. Just as a material

church possesses a cornerstone so Christ is the Cornerstone of His Mystical Body, the Holy Catholic Church. In this Church all the living stones are joined together to form the holy temple of the Lord. Thus it is true to say that the Church, by and with Christ, is the house of God.

Today, on earth, the Church of Christ is being built up stone upon stone, according to the working out of God's Providence. So too an eternal temple is being raised in heaven according to the plans of the divine Architect. This temple will be dedicated by Christ our great High Priest on the last day when time shall be no more. Then will the world be restored to the holy Creator and God will be all in all. Then will be fully realized the vision of John the Seer, "I . . . saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven . . . And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men." (Revelation 21:2, 3.)

These, then, brethren, are the thoughts I would leave with you as we commemorate the dedication of this beloved church. Remember that if you heartily seek you will find God's Presence here. Remember that though your sins may mar your spiritual vision your penitence can always gain pardon and a renewed apprehension of the presence of God, and that that can be accomplished here. Remember that our God is One Whose Presence ever abides with us in His Church. In this building, so long ago set apart as a place in which to reverence the Trinity we continue to honor that godly dedication with the sure and certain hope that when time and space are no more we shall, with angels and archangels, adore and glorify the Most Blessed Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — for all eternity.

TENTH STATION OF THE CROSS

"Jesus is stripped of His garments."

By Archie Pratt Nickels

Dear Lord Jesus,
Weary in the travail
Of carrying the Cross,
They took Thee on Golgotha,
Stripped Thee,
Parted Thy garments,
Cast lots for the seamless coat
Mary had woven Thee.
And there amid the rabble,
In the dust,
In the noise,
They left thee naked,
Sweating,
Thirsting,
Awaiting the nails
And the cruel wood.

Saint Francis of Assisi,
Kneeling,
Richly clad and furred,
Saw Thee in a vision,
Loved Thee in Thy shame.
For love of Thee he stripped himself,
Took on his weak human shoulders
Thy pain,
Thy poverty,
Thy loneliness, dear Lord.
In the end he died of love of Thee,
Died praising,
Singing,
Rejoicing,
As he lay blind and naked on the stones.

Once I too had a vision of Thee, Lord,
My own eyes saw Thee,
Thy pain,
Thy thirst,
Thy shame,
Felt the deathless love in Thy surrender.

Cowley

This was in Africa,
And the vision of Thee shone
From red-rimmed eyes,
Eyes glazing
Into oblivion;
Eyes of brown man,
Kneeling,
Tortured,
Body bent
To take the cutting lash.

Kneeling that night,
Heart-broken like Francis,
I prayed to bear
On my own weak shoulders
Some little part
Of the pain and shame:
Thy pain, Lord,
The pain and poverty of Africa;
Prayed for love
To love this Africa in Thee,
And for this love
To bear some small tithe
Of what lies heavy here
On brown backs, brown limbs,
Negro hearts;
And looks upon the world
From negro eyes,
From soft brown eyes like Thine, my Lord.

'Tis easy to forget
A granted prayer, O my Lord;
'Tis easy to rebel
'Gainst poverty and separation,
To envy others' riches, pride, security;
Easy to forget
That 'twas I who prayed
To share Thy lot,
My brothers' lot,
The lot of Francis;
Easy to forget

The Tenth Station of the Cross

The honour Thou didst give,
Accepting
The little, oh so little that my heart
Knew how to offer Thee.

Here today,
In this holy place,
Seeing Thee pictured in Thy Passion,
Seeing Thee stripped,
Mocked,
Shown to the gloating crowd,
The crowd that waited for the Cross,
Today in anguish I remember.

Grant me only, dearest Lord,
To keep this mind I have today,
Tomorrow,
Always;
Grant that ever I may glory
In the honour Thou hast done me;

Teach me to find the joy in the pain,
The richness in the poverty,
In the loneliness the love.
Living, I would fain rejoice;
Dying, like Francis, I would praise,
Singing loud my love for Thee.

And now, my stripped and dying Lord,
I would be a little while
Alone with Thee;
Knowing that in Thee
I have all things,
Because Thou hast laid Thy hand upon me.

St. Francis' College.
Mariannhill Mission,
Natal, Union of South Africa

THEOLOGY OF HOLY UNCTION

By Father Williams, S.S.J.E.

MAN is a complex being made up of body and soul. Yet this truth is not infrequently misrepresented, as though man's bodily, and psychical (or spiritual) natures were somehow independent of one another; as though the close partnership of body and soul was merely an accidental association of separate, and even opposed, natures. Thus, in a good deal of "popular" theology, the "spiritual" is put in opposition to the "material." It is necessary, therefore, to point out that this opposition is not characteristic of Christian Theology at its best, and finds no foundation in New Testament teaching. The opposite of the spiritual is not the material — but the *unspiritual.* Body, soul, and spirit (if we use the latter to indicate the specifically supernatural endowments of man's soul) form in man a perfect unity — or at least this perfect unity is what man is called upon to strive for as a Christian ideal with the help of divine grace. The philosophy of sacramentalism is, in itself, a direct assertion of this complete *interdependence* of the material and the spiritual, of man's body and man's soul. Modern psychosomatic medicine with its emphasis upon man as a unity of soul and body, and not merely an ingenious material machine, is an assertion of the same great truth.

Christianity finds its roots and origin in Judaism; and Judaism proclaimed very clearly this doctrine of man as an integrated whole of body and spirit. Judaism, writes Doctor Frank Gavin (*The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments,* p. 10) was characterized by "its fundamental and characteristic non-dualism." Body and soul form an indissoluble whole. So sin can cause disease. True bodily health requires spiritual health. Doctor R. M. Woolley in his valuable study (*Exorcism and the Healing of the Sick,* p. 7), quotes a Rabbinic saying, "No sick man recovers from his disease until his sins be forgiven." (*Bab. Nedarim,* 41a). It is certain that our Lord Himself held this view as to the close connection between bodily and spiritual health. In fact, this may well offer a clue to the understanding of Jesus' healing of the paralytic, as narrated in St. Mark's Gospel (II, 5-11). "When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The later physical cure of the sufferer, is expressly stated by our Lord to be a proof — an outward and visible sign — of the reality of the forgiveness pronounced by Him. Dr. Woolley summarizes from this healing miracle, Jesus' attitude towards illness and disease: —

Theology of Holy Unction

"Evil is the cause and source of every kind of sickness which man endures. Whether it be spiritual — that of the soul, which is called sin — or natural — that of the body which is called disease — the ultimate cause is the same, evil has obtained possession of him. And if he is delivered from the evil that possesses him, then he is whole altogether in body and soul. So it is that He Who is Lord of all things, supreme in the natural and spiritual world, when He purges from sin, purges from all evil with all its accompaniments in body and soul, from disease of body, as from disease of soul. So He declares the healing words, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' and 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk,' as meaning one and the same thing." (Woolley, *op. cit,* p. 1).*

If health of body and health of soul are thus closely connected; it would seem that the common teaching as to the effects brought about by the anointing of the sick with oil, in the developed Sacrament of Holy Unction, as used both by the Eastern and Western Churches, represents a sound and true development, and corresponds with our Lord's own teaching as set forth in the Gospels. For the Sacrament of Holy Unction, including as it does, the purpose of bodily healing (if in accordance with God's will), puts in a place of primary importance the inward and spiritual healing of the soul through the strengthening power of divine forgiveness. According to the present teaching of the Church of Rome, the sacrament imparts "a special grace of divine assistance, whereby the sick person is spiritually relieved and comforted, namely, to resist and overcome the assaults and temptations of the devil, to bear with patience the disability and pain of his disease in such wise that the alleviation of his mind may react upon the body, and may conduce to the restoration of his health if this shall be expedient for his salvation." (Lehmkuhl: *Theologia Moralis,* Vol. II, p. 715) (Quoted by M. R. Newbolt, *Healing,* pp. 50, 51). The Russian Catechism says: "Unction with oil is a sacrament in which, while the body is anointed with oil, God's grace is invoked on the sick to heal him of spiritual and bodily infirmities" (Quoted by Newbolt, *op. cit.,* p. 46). In the Eastern Church, the objective of physical healing is unquestionably more emphasized than is the case in the Roman Church but, as Canon Newbolt points out (*op. cit* p. 47), "both East and West agree on the main point,

* In quoting this passage from Dr. Woolley, I do not wish to be understood as holding that sickness is always the result of the personal sin of the sufferer, or that our Lord believed that this was the case. The contrary is clearly taught in the Book of Job, and is also the teaching of the Fourth Gospel (John IX, 2, 3) where in reply to the question "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?", our Lord replies, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents". The passage from Mark does show, however, the close connection between spiritual and bodily health, and this is the point that I wish to emphasize in connection with Holy Unction.

that the healing of spiritual infirmities is the first object of this sacrament, and that bodily healing is a secondary, though a real part of its content."

The official teaching of the Post-Reformation Church of England is indicated by the form for Holy Unction given in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549). The prayer in question is introduced by the following rubric: —

"If the sick person desires to be anointed, then shall the Priest anoint him upon the forehead or breast only, making the sign of the cross, saying thus:

As with this visible oil thy body outwardly is anointed; so our heavenly Father, Almighty God, grant of His infinite goodness, that thy soul inwardly may be anointed with the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of all strength, comfort, relief and gladness: and vouchsafe for His great mercy (if it be His blessed will) to restore unto thee thy bodily health and strength, to serve Him; and send thee releases of all thy pains, troubles and diseases both in body and mind. And howsoever His goodness (by His divine and unsearchable providence) shall dispose of thee, we His unworthy ministers and servants, humbly beseech the eternal Majesty to do with thee according to the multitude of His innumerable mercies, and to pardon thee all thy sins and offenses, committed by all thy bodily senses, passions and carnal affections: who also vouchsafe mercifully to grant unto thee ghostly strength, by His Holy Spirit, to withstand and overcome all temptations and assaults of thine adversary, that in no wise he prevail against thee, but that thou mayest have perfect victory and triumph against the devil, sin, and death, through Christ our Lord: who by His death hath overcome the prince of death, and with the Father and the Holy Ghost evermore liveth and reigneth God, world without end. Amen."

The prayer seems unduly long, but the meaning and purpose of it is entirely clear. The physical healing prayed for is conditioned by a prior "inward anointing" of the soul by the Holy Ghost. The rite is thus truly sacramental in the fullest sense, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." A sacrament is a *pledge* to assure us that we shall, without fail, receive its full effect provided that the proper dispositions are present in us as recipients. So the "inward anointing" by the Holy Ghost is the primary purpose here, as elsewhere, of the Sacrament of Unction. "Restoration to health" is strictly secondary, and cannot always be expected. Besides this "inward anointing with the Holy Ghost", stated to be the principal effect of the sacrament, the prayer goes on to ask for mental and bodily healing ("release of all — pains, troubles and diseases both of body and mind") and concludes with petitions for pardon of sins, and for spiritual strength in temptations associated with sickness and death.

Theology of Holy Unction

The implied theology of Holy Unction as expressed by this form from the First English Prayer Book, then, would seem to differ but little from the teaching of the Church of Rome as to the effect of this Sacrament. The Edwardine prayer does preserve a better balance between the "inward and spiritual" and the "outer and bodily" healing than does the present Roman *form* for Extreme Unction, where pardon of sins alone is prayed for in connection with the actual anointing. ("By this holy Unction and by his most gracious mercy, the Lord pardon whatsoever thou hast done amiss by seeing" (*or,* "hearing", "smelling", "tasting", etc.)) Furthermore, in the Prayer Book Form, nothing is said about the restriction of the anointing to those who are in imminent danger of death (*in extremis*). But with these exceptions, the teaching of the Edwardine Rite is very similar to that of the rest of Western Catholicism.

There can be but little doubt, therefore, that had the use of Holy Unction been uninterruptedly retained in our Communion, we should be in complete agreement with the rest of the Catholic Church, East and West, as to its truly sacramental character, and its impartation of spiritual grace. Unfortunately, however, provisions for the anointing of the sick were dropped from the English Book of Common Prayer in the revision of 1552, and have never since been restored. In recent years, in other parts of the Anglican Communion, forms for the anointing of the sick have been reintroduced. The form entitled "Unction of the Sick" now in our American Prayer Book (*Revision of 1928*, p. 320), when compared with the Edwardine Form given above, is lacking in clear teaching both as to the sacramental character of unction, and as to any inward grace imparted by the rite. The form set forth can (according to the Rubric) be used indifferently for either "Anointing or Laying on of Hands" and although the introductory prayer asks for "release from sin", and the driving away of "all pain of soul and body" as well as restoration to "soundness of health", the words which accompany the actual anointing, or the laying on of hands, are strictly confined to the putting to flight of "all pain and sickness of *body*" alone, with a prayer for the restoration to "the blessing of health." In this exclusive emphasis upon bodily health alone, the *form* in our Prayer Book is as exaggerated and one-sided in one direction as is the Roman *form* in the other, in its exclusive emphasis on pardon of sins. Because of these ambiguities, this rite for "Unction of the Sick" can hardly be said to be satisfactory from the Catholic point of view. Unction is not here clearly a sacrament, and the rite cannot, there-

fore, be said to be a restoration of "the lost pleiad of the Anglican firmament" — the Sacrament of Holy Unction — as many hoped might be the case. How has it come about that a rite of this ambiguous character has been added to our American Prayer Book?

To answer this question we must return to the New Testament and examine the well-known passage in the Epistle of St. James (Chap. V, 14, 15) which has been generally regarded as the clearest scriptural warrant for Holy Unction. The passage reads as follows:

> "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him."

The meaning of this passage would seem at first sight to be perfectly clear. The elders (priests or presbyters) of the Church are to be summoned to the bedside of the sick faithful ("among you"). Further, we are dealing here, not with the exercise of some special and extraordinary gift of healing bestowed upon an individual, but with a function belonging to the elders (presbyters) in their official capacity. They are to pray over the sick Christian, and to anoint him with oil "in the name of the Lord." As a result, a two-fold effect is to be looked for, namely (1) bodily healing ("the Lord shall raise him up") and (2) what may be termed a "spiritual healing" ("if he have committed sins it shall be forgiven him.') This linking together of bodily healing with the forgiveness of sins is, as we have seen, entirely congruous with Jewish belief. This is scarcely surprising, for there is general agreement that the Epistle of James is a Jewish-Christian document. The passage would seem, therefore, to give full scriptural warrant to what may now be termed, the Catholic view of the Theology of Unction.

But this interpretation of the passage, as well as our general conclusions thus far, have been vigorously contested in an interesting and learned paper, *"The Anointing of the Sick in Scripture and Tradition, with some Considerations on the Numbering of the Sacraments"*, written by the late Father F. W. Puller, S.S.J.E., and published in 1904. Father Puller's object in publishing this study was to show that the Sacrament of Holy Unction, as developed in both Eastern and Western Churches, was based upon an incorrect exegesis of the passage in the Epistle of James. He himself was anxious to see the anointing of the sick restored to the Anglican Communion in what he considered to be its primitive and scriptural form. In his opinion unction was intended only and exclusively for bodily

healing, and being unaccompanied by any inward and spiritual grace or blessing (except, as it were accidentally) it could not, and ought not to be thought of as properly a sacrament. As a method of restoring the sick to health through the ministrations of the Church, its revival was much to be desired; but it should only be revived as a kind of authorized "faith-healing," and any suggestion of impartation of sacramental grace by the anointing must be carefully avoided. He states categorically (*op. cit.* p. 310) that in any form for the anointing of the sick authorized by the Anglican Communion, "there should be no petition for sanctifying graces in any of the prayers sanctioned for use, either during the Anointing itself or by way of immediate preparation for it." He objects to the Edwardine prayer for anointing, already referred to, because, as he says "as it stands, the Edwardine prayer is based on mediaeval rather than apostolic and primitive teaching" (*op. cit.* p. 309).

Because of Father Puller's standing as a theologian and scholar, his negative conclusions regarding the purpose and nature of Holy Unction have had great weight in influencing the theology of Unction in our Communion. It is not unlikely that these considerations had their part in shaping the present form for the Unction of the Sick in our American Book of Common Prayer. We must, therefore, consider the arguments advanced by Father Puller.

His main contention is that the passage in the Epistle of James, already referred to, is intended to give directions for dealing with *two* different classes of Christians, namely: — (1) the sick generally, who are to be prayed over and anointed for the purpose of restoring them to health only, and (2) sick sinners, who in addition to the treatment already described are to be assured of the forgiveness of their sins by the attending elders. To Father Puller it is clear that this forgiveness of sins could only be imparted by what is now known as the Sacrament of Penance, in other words, by confession and absolution. "That the Church has received power to remit sins, and that normally the sins, which are to be so remitted, need to be confessed, these are elementary principles of the Gospel, which in an Apostolic epistle addressed to members of the Church did not need to be explained at length" (Puller: *op. cit.* p. 30).

In reply to this contention, it must be pointed out that the passage in the Epistle of James certainly does not *require* the construction that Father Puller puts upon it, and is much more naturally read as describing a two-fold effect of healing — bodily and spiritual. Dr.

Woolley (*Exorcism and the Healing of the Sick*, p 6), commenting on the passage, points to "the association of sin and sickness together," and "that the anointing with prayer restores the whole man to health both in body and soul." He adds: "It is quite unnatural to separate here, as has been done, the forgiveness of sin and the healing from sickness." And while it is true, as Father Puller says, that confession and absolution is what might be termed the normal and usual means of assuring the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins in the Church Catholic, the Sacraments of Penance and Baptism are not the only sacraments which in some sense impart remission of sins. As Dr. F. J. Hall points out, "the Blessed Sacrament is to a degree remissive, when remission is necessary," and further, "every operation of the Spirit in human souls either presupposes or looks to the remedy of sin; and therefore it is not erroneous to associate remission with any bestowal of grace." (F. J. Hall: *The Sacraments*, pp. 319, 318). Incidentally the simultaneous healing of body and soul which seems to be posited by St. James, is more in accord with what we know of psychological processes, than the mere bodily healing, unconnected with any inward and spiritual grace, assumed by Father Puller. If the distinction between the merely sick, and the sick who are also sinners drawn by Father Puller is invalid, as we believe, his main argument as to the unprimitive and unscriptural character of the Sacrament of Unction collapses.

In confirmation of his thesis, that the "apostolic and primitive" use of unction did not include any idea of the impartation of spiritual graces, Father Puller argues that in the records of the early Church, up to approximately the Ninth Century, while anointing of the sick by oil for the purpose of bodily healing was very generally in use, there is no evidence of such anointing being connected either with the remission of sins or with the impartation of spiritual graces. From about the Ninth Century on, however, the idea begins to be expressed that grace is sacramentally imparted by unction, and this rapidly develops into the mediaeval theology of the Sacrament of Holy Unction. The facts are undoubtedly as Father Puller states them, but they hardly bear the interpretation that he puts upon them. As Dr. Woolley remarks, the history of anointing with oil in the Christian Church "affords an interesting example of development, showing how a *charisma* grew first into a sacramental and finally became one of the seven Sacraments." (Woolley, *op. cit.*, p. vii.) It would appear that the earliest use of anointing in the Church was entirely unconnected with the instructions given by the

author of the Epistle of James. Rather it was derived from two passages in St. Mark's Gospel, where we read (VI, 13), that the twelve were sent out by Jesus "and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them"; and where, in the ending of the Gospel, the prophecy is made of those "that believe," that "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (XVI, 18). Here anointing and the laying on of hands are strictly parallel, the anointing has but little relationship to the developed Sacrament of Holy Unction, and both anointing and the laying on of hands are forms of exorcism — the casting out of the demons which are supposed to cause disease. The use of oil in connection with exorcism of this kind was natural enough, as oil was anciently regarded as having valuable medicinal properties. We know that charismatic gifts of healing were bestowed upon certain individuals in the Apostolic Church. (Cf: I Cor. XII, 9. "To another (is given) the gifts of healing by the same Spirit." 30 "Have all the gifts of healing?") Anointing of this kind consisted of cures, attempted or effected, by the individual possessors of charismatic gifts, rather than a regulated rite of the Church, carried out by her official ministry. In modern times, the closest parallel to this practice would be found in cures claimed to be wrought by contact with the relics of the saints, or with faith-cures which may take place at Lourdes, or at other places of religious pilgrimage. Healings and cures of this sort, not subject to ecclesiastical regulation, easily tend to superstition and abuse, and this is what actually took place with the practice of healing in the early Church. It was because of such abuses, that the Church attempted in various ways to supervise the *charisma.* A special order of exorcists was set up, with regular functions proper to them, in blessing oil for the healing of the sick. The oil thus formally blessed and consecrated by the Church's ministers, was naturally looked upon as a "sacramental": with properties similar to those of holy water in the modern Western Church. It was only a short further step to regard Unction as a true sacrament; imparting sanctifying grace to the recipient, *ex opere operato.* It is possible, of course, to regard this whole process as a regrettable corruption. On the other hand, it seems more likely that we have here an illustration of the guidance of the Church by the Holy Spirit of God. Even from the merely human point of view, it would seem unwise to disregard the accumulated wisdom of the Church throughout the ages, in an attempt to restore a supposed more primitive usage which the Church has outgrown. As Canon Newbolt remarks

in this connection, "Ecclesiastical Law — represents the crystallized results of experience — and the present teaching concerning the effect of the sacrament (of Unction), combined with restrictions of its use, appear to have been produced by the steady pressure of various kinds of disadvantages or impropriety which a more indiscriminate policy involves. Whatever may be said against the popular cult of relics, the sacrament of Unction is free from the charge of superstitious use." (M. R. Newbolt: *Healing,* p. 54, 55.)

It is strange that the early use of anointing of the sick was thus apparently entirely unconnected with the passage in the Epistle of St. James, but such appears to be the fact. The first reference to the passage that we have occurs in a letter written by Decentius, Bishop of Eugubium, to Pope Innocent I in A.D. 416. And the Bishop asks the Pope *what the passage means!* The Pope, in his reply (see Puller, *op. cit.,* p. 53 ff.), says that oil consecrated by the Bishop may be employed by the clergy *or laity* for anointing the sick; but that it ought not to be administered to those "doing penance", that is to say, to those under ecclesiastical censure, "because it is a kind of sacrament; for how can it be supposed that one kind of sacrament may be granted to those, to whom the other sacraments are denied?" Once anointing was thus brought into connection with the injunction in the Epistle of James, this would naturally aid the tendency to transform such unction into one of the Church's Sacraments, a transformation complete by the Ninth Century, or even earlier.

The question as to the conditions under which Holy Unction should be administered (provided it thus be regarded as a sacrament) remains to be discussed. Canon Newbolt (*op. cit.,* pp. 52, 53) sums up the traditional regulations as follows: —

"It is for the baptized only. Its subject is a Christiain of years of discretion, who is sick and in at least remote danger of death. Not an infant who has done no sin, for the forgiveness of sins is an essential effect of the sacrament, not a man in health who is in danger of death, such as a soldier going into action, a man condemned to execution, or a woman expecting childbirth, since it is a sacrament for the sick and those suffering from present bodily infirmity. It is not for trivial or chronic ailments." These regulations are, we believe, sound and wise. For more general use, the Laying on of Hands, using the form given in the American Prayer Book would be entirely appropriate and suitable. But anointing should not, we believe, be used with this particular form. To do so would be to

reduce Holy Unction from a sacrament into a kind of exorcism, or at best to the status of a "sacramental." As regards the Sacrament of Unction, Canon Newbolt continues: "Some discretion as to the degree of sickness appropriate for Unction there must obviously be if we are to preserve the dignity of the sacrament — the rough general distinction implied by 'remote danger of death', draws a line between grave illness — and troublesome complaints like chronic dyspepsia, ordinary cases of rheumatism and neuralgic pains. On the other hand it is a perversion of the use of the sacrament to postpone it until the patient is *in extremis* and incapable of making any response to the reception of grace." Thus to postpone the sacrament is one of the features marking the usual modern Roman Catholic practice, to which exception may rightly be taken. But having said this much, we hasten to add that Holy Unction should, of course, be used for patients *in extremis,* if it may be reasonably assumed that the sick person would desire such anointing if conscious. To quote again from Canon Newbolt (*ibid,* p. 56), "The sacrament of 'the last Unction' provides a means for calming and fortifying the soul in face of the approach of death which comes to all men, though not all experience the need of healing."

Obviously the American form for Unction of the Sick would be quite inappropriate in this latter case, or indeed, in the case of any really critical illness. We therefore again suggest that the form given in our Prayer Book be used *only* in connection with the Laying on of Hands, when *healing* is the principal benefit looked for; and that *in all other cases,* where the principal grace sought is the inward anointing of the soul, Holy Unction with oil be used, accompanied by the Prayer from the Edwardine Prayer Book. It is, of course, greatly to be hoped that our American Prayer Book will some day be enriched by the provision of an unambiguous form appropriate to the administration of the Sacrament of Holy Unction, such as may be seen in the fine office now set forth by authority for use in the Province of South Africa.* In the meantime, until a satisfactory form is provided for us, priests who believe in, and wish to use, Holy Unction may certainly use the Edwardine Prayer with a good conscience. This was the usual procedure before the last revision of our American Book of Common Prayer, and was defended as entirely loyal and proper by many distinguished Anglican theologians. It is still loyal and proper. A custom based on general Catholic consent — both East and West — and founded on a solidly Scrip-

tural basis cannot well be claimed to be contrary to the mind and teaching of our Anglican Communion, or of the Episcopal Church.

No priest who has had experience of the ministry of the Sacrament of Holy Unction is likely to forget it. He will have seen instances of remarkable recoveries of health, in cases where physicians have said there was no hope; and, in ministering to the dying, he will have noted the remarkable peace and calm which so frequently follows anointing. We conclude with some words of Canon Newbolt: (*op. cit.*, p. 54) "It is as the *last* anointing that we shall chiefly look upon (this sacrament); and in spite of the materialistic drag of modern thought, we shall insist that spiritual benefits are a boon which mortal man stands most in need of when the time comes for man to die."

* Unfortunately, the new form for Holy Unction suggested by the Standing Liturgical Commission of our Episcopal Church (*Prayer Book Studies III, The Order for the Ministration to the Sick*, p. 31 ff.), continues the mistaken emphasis on Unction as mainly concerned with physical healing. This is true even though one of the preparatory prayers (p. 32) asks that "those who in faith receive this holy unction may be healed both in body and in soul." In addition, the passage from the Epistle of James (p. 31) is deliberately translated so as to exclude any possibility that one of the effects of the anointing with oil may be the forgiveness of sins. The prayer provided to accompany the actual anointing, *combines* laying on of hands with the anointing, and instead of being an improvement over the present form is rather the reverse. It is also assumed by the accompanying rubric that unction will normally be given to "sick persons" who are able to "come forward and kneel at the altar rail."

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COMMUNITY CHRONICLE

ON July 27th, the Father Superior left for Cincinnati for a brief visit at the Convent of the Sisters of the Transfiguration in Glendale, Ohio, where he addressed the Sisters on the work of the Church in Japan. From Cincinnati he went on to Toronto for a visitation to the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, of which he is the Warden. The Sisters have recently moved from their old convent on Major Street in downtown Toronto, to a new Mother House at Willowdale, just north of the city's boundaries; and this was Father Williams' first visit there. On August 4th the Father drove to Bracebridge, Ontario, to visit the Mission House of our Society in Canada. One day while in Bracebridge, one of the Fathers drove him to Port Sydney, on the beautiful Mary Lake, where the Sisters of St. John the Divine have a Summer rest-cottage. On August 7th, Father Williams travelled to Chicago, where he was met by Father Banner; saying Mass on Sunday, August 9th at St. Francis' Church. That afternoon, Father Banner drove him to St. Mary's Convent at Kenosha, Wisconsin; where by invitation of the Reverend Mother of the Community of St. Mary, he conducted a retreat for the Sisters of St. Anne from the Chicago Convent of the Order. Several of the St. Mary's Sisters also attended the retreat. Father Williams left on August 15th for Denver, beginning a retreat for the Sisters of St. Anne there on the evening of Sunday, August 16th. On the following Sunday, August 23rd, he preached in the morning at St. George's Church, Englewood, Colorado; and that evening began a retreat for Associates of the Order of St. Anne and others, at St. Anne's Convent in Denver. He went on from Denver to San Francisco, where he was entertained at the Rectory of the Church of the Advent (for so many years served by members of the Society), preaching at that church and renewing many old friendships. On Thursday, September 3rd, Father Williams travelled to Santa Barbara, California, where two restful days were spent at beautiful Mount Calvary, the Monastery of the Order of the Holy Cross on the Pacific coast. Arriving at Los Angeles on the afternoon of Saturday, September 5th, the Father Superior was met at the station by our priest-associate, the Rev. James Jordan, Jr.; and then proceeded by bus to Ontario, California, where he was the guest of another associate, Father J. G. Mills, rector of Christ Church. During his stay in Ontario, the Father preached at Christ Church, and admitted three new priest-associates of our Society. On September 10th, he went back to Los Angeles (Hollywood), as the guest of Father Jordan, the rector of the Church of St. Mary of

the Angels. Father Williams preached at that church also; and addressed an evening meeting of our associates of the Los Angeles district, when two new lay-associates were admitted. On the way back East, he stopped off at the Grand Canyon for a couple of days, arriving in Chicago on September 18th. That weekend was spent with the Brethren at St. Francis' Church. After preaching at the church on the morning of Sunday, September 20th; the Father left for Boston on the 21st, arriving home on the morning of September 22nd.

On the evening of October 1st, Father Williams was at St. Margaret's Convent, Boston, officiating and preaching at the reception of a Novice in that community. On the evening of October 8th, he gave an illustrated talk on Japan at the Church of the Advent, Boston. On October 18th, he again went to Toronto for another visitation to the Sisters of St. John the Divine. He left Toronto on October 23rd, going to Springfield, Massachusetts, where from the 25th to the 28th, he conducted a School of Prayer at Christ Church Cathedral. He was the Celebrant at the Mass and the preacher at St. Margaret's Convent in Boston on November 5th, when Sister Eugenie was solemnly professed in the Society of the Sisters of St. Margaret. From November 16th to 21st, he is to conduct a retreat for the All Saints Sisters at their convent at Catonsville, Maryland.

Father Smith, the Deputy Assistant Superior was in residence at St. Margaret's Convent, South Duxbury, Massachusetts, during the month of August. On October 12th, he attended a meeting of the Catholic Clerical Union in New York; representing the New England Branch of the Union, of which he is the President. On the way back to Cambridge, he stopped off in Rhode Island to give two addresses on the Religious Life to members of the Woman's Auxiliary. From October 23rd to 25th, Father Smith conducted a retreat for women at the House of the Redeemer in New York. On the morning of November 6th, he gave the broadcast "message" from the Church of All Nations, connected with the Morgan Memorial in Boston. He conducted a weekend retreat at the Monastery in Cambridge from November 6th to 8th. From November 9th to 14th, he gives a retreat for the Franciscan Friars at Little Portion, Mount Sinai, New York. From November 15th to November 22nd, he is scheduled to preach a mission at St. Uriel's Church, Sea Girt, New Jersey.

ORDINATION OF BROTHER CLAYTON TO THE DIACONATE

All Saint's Church, Springfield, Mass.

Sunday, June 28, 1953.

Left to right: Fr. Smith, Rev. J. A. Atkins, Br. Clayton, The Rt. Rev. W. Appleton Lawrence, Fr. Dalby, Fr. Williams, Fr. Banner, Fr. Gross, Br. Upson.

Cowley

Father Hanlon arrived in Chicago on September 15th, after several weeks spent at St. Margaret's House, New Hartford, N. Y.; the Utica convent of the Sisters of St. Margaret. He will be stationed at St. Francis' Church in Chicago, acting as Vicar of that church in succession to Father Banner, who will be returning to the Monastery in Cambridge in November to assume the duties of the Assistant Superior of the Community.

Father Haratani, in company with Brother Benedict, left Cambridge for Chicago on August 17th. Brother Benedict will make his residence at St. Francis' Church in that city during the coming winter, while studying for Holy Orders at the Seabury-Western Divinity School at Evanston, Illinois. Father Haratani, after an extended visit in Chicago, left there on October 5th for the Pacific Coast, in preparation for his journey back to Japan. He visited in Hollywood, Santa Barbara and San Francisco, California; giving a number of addresses on the work of the Society in the Province of Nippon. He sailed from San Francisco on November 5th for Honolulu, where he stops over for about three weeks; sailing again for Yokohama on December 4th, and due in Japan on December 13th. *Bon Voyage!*

Father Banner, the new Assistant Superior, left Chicago, where he has been Vicar of St. Francis' Church for the past three years, on October 5th, to drive to El Paso, Texas. He visited with a number of our associates *en route,* stopping at Wamego, Salina, and Lawrence, Kansas; conducting a retreat and preaching. In El Paso, he preached a mission at St. Alban's Church from October 19th to 23rd. After visits with his family in El Paso and in Fort Worth, Texas, he started for the East. He is due in Cambridge about November 25th.

Father McDonald, the Master of Novices left Cambridge on September 23rd for Cincinnati, for a visit with his family. On October 10th, he proceeded to Nassau in the Bahamas, where he is visiting Bishop Burton, S.S.J.E., and conducting retreats for the clergy of the Diocese of Nassau and for the Sisters of St. Peter. He leaves Nassau on November 9th, and after a brief visit with a brother in Florida, is due back at the Monastery on November 11th. The Father has made the entire trip by plane and writes of his amazement at the unbelievably speedy change from Northern latitudes to the climate of the Tropics.

With the departure of Father Hanlon to Chicago, Father Pedersen, Superior of the Mission House in Boston, and Vicar of the

Church of St. John the Evangelist, was left without assistance. The gap has been filled by Father Everett, who is now in residence at the Mission House, and assisting in the work there. Brother Clayton also goes on to the Mission House for the week ends to strengthen the staff there.

Saint Augustine's Farm in Foxboro has had a chance to prove its usefulness as a place of rest and recreation during the past Summer. Several groups of the Fathers and Brothers have been able to spend happy days there. A good deal has been accomplished in clearing the area around the Priests' house after many years of neglect; although much still needs to be done. The Farm is only about an hour's drive from Cambridge, making it very accessible. On Wednesday, November 4th, in the Octave of All Saints, the annual Mass of Requiem for the repose of the souls of those buried in the cemetery was sung in St. Michael's Chapel there; followed by a visitation to the cemetery itself, where prayers were said, and the graves sprinkled with Holy Water. The choir of Fathers and Brothers was assisted by Sisters of the Order of St. Anne. The Father Superior was the Celebrant.

On the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels (September 29th), following a High Mass at the Monastery of St. Mary and St. John in Cambridge, the Father Superior blessed the sepulchre and altar stone of the new marble altar in the Lady Chapel. The altar is constructed of golden yellow Siena marble, with an inserted lozenge in the front of green Verte d'Issorie marble; harmonizing beautifully with the existing footpace and the antique Venetian reredos of the Lady Chapel. The new altar is the gift of Mary Chalmers Wilson, of Newport, R. I.; a member of the Fellowship of St. John, in memory of her husband, the Reverend Andrew Chalmers Wilson, who was also a member of the Fellowship. The Altar will be solemnly consecrated later on by the Lord Bishop of Nassau, the Right Reverend Spence Burton, S.S.J.E.

The Brother in charge of the Linen Closet at our Monastery in Cambridge again reports an alarming shortage in sheets, pillowcases, and towels — both face and bath towels. We should be very grateful indeed to any of our readers who could come to our rescue at this time! Used linens would be welcomed as well as new articles, provided they are in sound condition. Packages may be sent to: —

The Brother Housekeeper
980 Memorial Drive
Cambridge 38, Mass.

FROM THE MONASTERY LETTER-BAG

LETTER FROM A RELIGIOUS

(In October 1950, U. S. Troops in Korea pushed North to Pyongyang, where civilian prisoners, captured earlier in Seoul by the Communists were located. These prisoners were then forced by their captors to walk to a new point of detention in the North. This letter narrates the death of Sister Mary Clare of the Community of St. Peter, due to the forced march; and refers also to Father Charles Hunt of the Korean Mission, who died on the march itself. It is a moving account of heroic endurance and of true charity displayed by Christians both Protestant and Catholic.)

July 5, 1953

THE news of Sister Mary Clare's martyrdom has been a source of great inspiration and strength to me. She was not at all the kind of person one would naturally have expected to leave such a heritage to her Community and the Church. And yet how wonderfully God has used her. Hers was truly a *via dolorosa* like that of our Lord. Philip Deane, the London Observer correspondent who was taken on the "death march" with Bishop Cooper and the others, wrote a series of articles in one morning paper telling in great detail the experiences they had — and it must have been indeed most terrible. He had seen Sister Mary Clare being carried in the arms of an American Methodist missionary, Nellie Wyer; and he had seen Father Hunt being dragged along by his companions with his feet lacerated to the bone; and he saw the British vice-consul marching along with Father Hunt's chasuble torn in half on his feet. The Bishop has said that Philip Deane's reports have been completely true in detail. Sister Mary Clare was taken on the last part of the journey in a lorry, and was cared for by two Roman Catholic Carmelite nuns. She died the day after they arrived at the camp, and these two nuns risked their lives to bury her; and when Bishop Cooper arrived on foot, three days later, they took her cross and ring to him as proof of her death. (The Sister died November 9th, 1950.)

To me, Sister's witness has been a most wonderful thing. She was faithful to the very end. The years since 1945, when she returned to Korea alone must have been unbelievably hard. Wasn't it an expression of God's great tenderness and compassionate Love that in all the turmoil and confusion at the end she was with Religious, and that Father Hunt was beside the Bishop? They were all able to make their confessions on the march, but there was no means of

celebrating a Mass. The Bishop celebrated his first Mass in almost three years on St. George's Day last . . . and intends to return to his Diocese in October. We have read much of the persecution of Roman Catholics in Communist-dominated countries, but when it comes to one's own people, it most certainly comes home with great force.

I must tell you a little also about Commissioner Lord of the Salvation Army. He was the official interpreter. Philip Deane said they held a revolver at his head practically all the time during the terrible march. He kept pleading on his knees with tears running down his cheeks for mercy for those who were being so cruelly treated. They told him that if he didn't stop they would shoot him, but he wouldn't stop.

When Mother Beatrice, the Superior of the Carmelite Community in Seoul kept falling by the wayside (she was 77) they finally ordered her to be shot. They made Mr. Lord sign her death certificate — heart failure! She had given most of her life to work for orphans in Korea, and she was the Superior of the Community to which the two nuns who cared for Sister Mary Clare belonged. Philip Dean said he didn't know how Mr. Lord kept his sanity. Wasn't his faith wonderful, and didn't he have most truly a burning love of souls?

The more I think of it all, the more wonderful it seems to me. *We* have such easy ways of proving our faith and love — and what a poor job so many of us make of it.

(*Father Charles Hunt became exhausted on the march and finally was allowed to ride in an ox cart. But by this time he was almost unconscious, and died November 20, 1950, in Bishop Cooper's arms.*)

OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF THE SOUL
OF
WALTER FREEMAN WHITMAN, S.T.D., D.C.L.
PRIEST ASSOCIATE OF THE SOCIETY OF
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY
AT NASHOTAH HOUSE
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON
MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1953.
MAY HE REST IN PEACE

BOOK REVIEWS

FATHER BENSON OF COWLEY, by M. V. Woodgate. Geoffrey Bles, London, 1953. Pages viii, 184. Cloth, price $2.25. (May be ordered from The Secretary of Publications, 980 Memorial Drive, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts).

THIS valuable little book has been greatly needed. It has been said, with some truth, that no one can truly apprehend the spirit of a Religious Community without some knowledge of its Founder; and the number of those who personally remember the Father Founder of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist is yearly decreasing.

For American readers it may be worth while to point out that the author has had much experience in the field of religious biography, and that her works have been translated into several European languages, including the Dutch.

The present book has been written with the approval and the assistance of the English Congregation of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist. It is aptly described by Father Dalby, the Superior General of the Society, in his Foreword as

> . . . a labour of love. It is based on the published works and letters of Father Benson, together with a number of unpublished letters and writings in the possession of the Society, amplified by the reminiscenses of certain Fathers still living, who can remember Father Benson in his declining years.
>
> Here in these pages Father Benson comes alive. This is no compilation of dreary facts — but a living portrait of a great man of God as he really was. This is the first attempt that has been made to write his life; and it is intended to be no more than a plain, straightforward story, depicting him against the background of the times in which he lived.

Richard Meux Benson was born in 1824, the son of wealthy and pious Evangelical parents. There is no record of a profound conversion experience such as appears in the lives of many religious leaders; the solid devotion of his early childhood and youth but deepened and strengthened with the passing of the years. It seems to have been always taken for granted that he would study for the priesthood.

In justice to Father Benson it deserves to be remembered that he was not always

> a little bent and shrivelled old man . . .

As an Oxford undergraduate he was a clever sparkling young man, who earned the title of "gay Dick Benson" from his contemporaries! He was remembered not only for his sparkling wit, but also for his very real devotion, and his very natural practise of religion.

The Father never lost the capacity for enjoyment which he evidenced during his student days. But one of the greatest influences of that time was his friendship with Dr. Pusey, who did so much for the restoration of the Religious Life in the Anglican Communion. This friendship endured until Pusey's death. Dr. Pusey's granddaughter has described to this reviewer the way she used to carry letters, while still a little girl, between the two friends.

Even as an undergraduate, Benson dreamed of serving God in India as a missionary Religious. But considerably more than forty years were to elapse before this greatest desire of his life was to have a token fulfillment. Twice, after all plans had been carefully made, the would-be recruit for the Indian Mission was kept in England by the wish of the Bishop of Oxford. There were to be years spent serving as parish priest (during this period he began the Retreat Movement in the Church of England, and laid down certain principles which have generally guided Anglican Retreat Conductors since that day); on December 27, 1866, the Society of Saint John the Evangelist was founded.

Here was another delay — the Society must be guided through its infancy and long formative period; there were American foundations to be made in Philadelphia and Boston. With the opening of the Society's work in India the Father hoped to go out himself. Not so; the desire must be held in abeyance. As Superior, he was privileged to send many of his ablest spiritual sons to labor in that land; but only after he surrendered his own deep longing to go to India was his prayer granted.

In 1890 he was relieved of his burden as Superior — he had held the office since 1866 — and the Fathers assembled in Chapter determined that Father Benson was to have a year in his beloved India. This turned out to be the happiest year of his whole life. Long after he wrote that he had left his heart in Bombay.

> Somehow, when I packed up, it got left behind!

After India, he spent nine fruitful years at the Mission House in Boston. He arrived in Boston at a time of great distress and unhappiness, and did much to heal the wounds caused by a most unfortunate situation. Nor were his ministrations confined to parish work in Boston. He ministered to several Sisterhoods — Sisters of several Communities have spoken gratefully of Father Benson's help to them to this reviewer. The Father was no stranger to this country, and had a very deep appreciation of the United States in general, as well as Boston in particular.

In 1899 he was ordered to Oxford to conduct the Christmas Retreat. The first years after his return were comparatively active — the last years were spent at the Mission House in Oxford. He fell asleep in the Lord on January 14, 1915. At that time he was more than ninety years old.

His books were widely read when they were published and are read and remembered still, while his memory also remains, not only because of the religious family he founded, but because of the example of his life, so completely given up to God. In that surrender and resulting union lay, as we have often seen, the whole secret of his strength, his courage, his faith, his service to others, and also the touch of glory that radiated from him, and which was, indeed, a reflection of the heaven in which his spirit so continually dwelt.

Doubtless more scholarly biographies of Father Benson will be written than Miss Woodgate's; we question whether any other will be more interesting!

EARLE HEWITT MADDUX, S.S.J.E.

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH, by Massey H. Shepherd, Jr. (Volume IV in the series on the Teaching of the Church) Department of Christian Education of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Seabury Press. Cloth, $2.50; Paper, $1.50.

THIS is the fourth volume in the series of the course on the Church's teaching, put out by the Department of Christian Education in our Church. The book is divided into two parts; part one is entitled "The Principles of Christian Worship", and part two, "The Book of Common Prayer."

The first part begins with a brief history of the origin of Christian worship, as centered in the Eucharist. "Especially in the Eucharist was the oneness of fellowship in Christ exhibited in all its fullness." The section on "Individualism and Indifference" is a definite and clear call to a wholehearted Christianity, compared with the diluted substitute that is typical of our age. Most illuminating is Dr Shepherd's discussion of "The Meaning of Liturgy." We are told that the root meaning of the word liturgy is "an act performed for the good of a community." The chapter entitled "The Heritage of the Liturgy", opens with a reference to Richard Hooker, pointing out that "the English Church had an ancient pedigree, deriving from one original mold." The author then traces back to this "original mold" in a most able way, giving us the Jewish background, the worship of the early Church, and the development of the historic liturgies and of mediaeval worship, up to the Reformation of the Liturgy, and our own American Prayer Book.

Part two opens with the words, "It comes as a surprise to many people, when opening the Book of Common Prayer for the first time, to discover that it begins with an almanac". Dr. Shepherd then shows how God works in time. We owe the distinctive character of feasts and fasts based on time to the Jews. The heathen based theirs on the courses of nature. There is a very interesting and informative instruction on the Divine Office. The explanation of the use of the Psalter in Christian worship is most enlightening, and should ease the scruples of many conscientious Churchmen who find "cursing passages" in the Psalms difficult to reconcile with the spirit of Christ. In the section dealing with the background of the Offices, it is shown that the desire of Cranmer was to give the Divine Office back to the laity. The author speaks of the hold that Morning and Evening Prayer have taken upon churchmen. Many of us regret that this devotion to Morning Prayer has been the cause of many of our fellow churchmen's losing hold of Eucharistic worship, which the author maintains must be central. It is too bad that Dr. Shepherd does not mention that here.

After a brief discussion of the Litany, which is rightfully admired and commended for the unsurpassed beauty of its phraseology; the author proceeds to discuss the Eucharistic Liturgy. There is an excellent meditation on our offerings at the Eucharist. These are of two kinds, the offering of our alms, and our oblations of bread and wine. Because our alms and oblations represent the fruits of our labor, therefore our Lord will accept them. There is necessarily involved a social obligation in the offertory; for how can Christians break bread together and not be deeply concerned for economic and social justice? This is indeed a vital truth; yet one would wish that the author had gone on to say that we Christians should be as deeply concerned with the state of millions who are starving spiritually; for Christianity is concerned both with soul and body.

The chapter entitled "Christian Initiation", deals with Baptism, the Office of Instruction, and Confirmation, and contains much valuable teaching material. The section dealing with Infant Baptism is particularly fine.

"Other Rites and Ceremonies" are then discussed; and the book concludes with a chapter on "The Ministry of the Church." This is excellent and praiseworthy. Dr. Shepherd gives an objective and clear account of the ministry showing the fact of Apostolic Succession, the necessity of the ministry, and how the Episcopal Church

values, and has retained, the ancient threefold orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

An excellent Bibliography on Liturgics concludes the volume.

The Church should indeed be grateful to Dr. Shepherd for the clear, objective, and spiritual way in which he and his collaborators have written this book. It can be read and easily digested by the average churchman, and can also be of great benefit to the clergy in their instructions on that subject for which man was created — the worship of Almighty God.

HERBERT F. HANLON, S.S.J.E.

SAINTS FOR NOW, Edited by Clare Boothe Luce. Sheed and Ward New York, 1952. Cloth, price $4.00.

THE aim of the editor is to make the saints real to the reader, and to show that they have a living message for our own age. This purpose has been well achieved in this volume.

In her introductory essay the editor reminds us of Ambrose Bierce's definition of a saint in "The Devil's Dictionary", 'A Saint is a dead sinner, revised and edited.' "Bierce the skeptic, was referring, of course, to that cloyingly pietistic school of hagiography which depicts the saint as a super-human character who is indeed constantly assaulted by temptation but is constitutionally unable to yield to it. It is a sheer invention of religiosity to depict a Saint as a human being who does deeds of derring-do of which no mortal is capable." But Mrs. Luce goes on, "The very meaning of the lives of the saints for us lies in the fact that they were sinners like ourselves trying like ourselves to combat sin. The only difference between them and us is that they kept on trying precisely because they believed that the revision and editing of sinner-into-saint is done not by man's pen but by God's grace."

In the various biographies which make up the bulk of this volume, most of the "popular" saints are included; as well as some less known ones, such as Simon Stylites and Pius V. To Anglicans, the latter name recalls the ex-communication of Elizabeth the First of England, and the resulting irretrievable breach with Rome; while the former figure can have but little attraction for modern readers. Nevertheless, after reading the sketch of the life of Pope Pius V, probably most of us will be lead to think a little more kindly of him; while as for St. Simon Stylites, his biographer remarks, "For what after all, do we — do I — admire St. Simon so enthusiastically for? It is for that terrible talent of his for doing nothing. There is no finer slap in the eye to the modern world than that."

The volume is highly recommended. While it seems to be written with the purpose of catching the interest of the "intellectual", or of those who claim to be so; yet it would prove useful for reading at meals in Religious Houses and at Retreats — for it is truly entertaining. What could be more exciting to the young than the lives of the saints; and what more consoling for the middle-aged than the saints, since several of them began their adventure for God in middle-age? And the aged can find wisdom in the saints, because they were wise, and because they loved the Holy Wisdom Iself. Blessed be God then, in His Saints!

HERBERT F. HANLON, S.S.J.E.

THE PEOPLE'S PRIEST. By John C. Heenan. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1952. Cloth, price $2.75.

THE author, who is the Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds, England, wrote this book before his consecration to the Episcopate. He was known as "Britain's Radio Priest", and was also National Director of the Legion of Mary in England, and Superior of the Catholic Missionary Society. He is probably the only English Roman Catholic priest to visit Russia under Communist Rule, and has twice made the lecture tours in the United States.

The object of this book is to help the secular priest to be a good pastor of souls. In Bishop Heenan's words, "It would be difficult to make a list of all the qualities required in a successful pastor of souls. Whatever these qualities are, the people themselves readily recognize them. If one expression can be used to describe them all it is — devotion. The people instinctively see when their priest is wholehearted in his service. Then they make him completely their Father. There is scarcely any more beautiful relationship in the world than that between the good priest and his people." The development of this relationship is the theme of this book.

It must of course, be remembered that this book is written primarily for English Roman Catholic priests, and therefore has the typically English Roman tone; containing much to which the Anglican must take exception. Nevertheless there is a great deal here which can be very helpful and useful to any priest — whether Roman or Anglican. It emphasizes the truth that the priest is the servant (minister) of the flock, as well as the servant of God.

HERBERT F. HANLON, S.S.J.E.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. (Course A, Episcopal Church Fellowship Series.) Morehouse-Gorham Co., New York, 1953. Teacher's Guide, $2.00; Pupil's Story Book, $1.50.

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Without a doubt, Our Heavenly Father is a valuable contribution to the Church School of the Episcopal Church.

A. M.

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN YEAR, Within the Fellowship of the Church. (Course 5, Episcopal Church Fellowship Series.) Morehouse-Gorham Co., New York, 1953. Teacher's Guide, $1.50; Pupil's Book, $1.50.

THIS excellent workbook is the fifth of the projected Episcopal Church Fellowship Series. It provides a competent guide to a more intelligent understanding of our Church's teachings. Following the outline of the Seasons of the Church's year, much Christian dogma is inculcated, and correlation between the lives of the saints, and the boy and girl of today is stressed.

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The entire format of the book is one which will be pleasing to the child. As an aid to the teacher, a valuable Teacher's Guide accompanies the book.

A. M.

Book Reviews

A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS. By Ronald Knox. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1952. Pages xviii, 284. Cloth, price $3.75.

ADMIRERS of Monsignor Ronald Knox — and they are many — will again be in his debt for this excellent brief commentary on the Gospels. While the commentaary is naturally conservative in tones, there is much here that is fresh and iiluminating; revealing the scholarly mind of the author. No difficulties are slurred over, and there is a refreshing absence of polemics. Indeed there can be few Christians, Catholic or Protestant, who would not be aided in their reading and study of the Holy Gospels by having this work at hand for constant reference. Mgr. Knox writes in the Preface, "The object of this commentary is to examine, briefly and candidly, such difficulties as present themselves to the mind of the ordinary reader." He has succeeded admirably in his purpose.

GRANVILLE M. WILLIAMS, S.S.J.E.

THE TRIAL OF OLIVER PLUNKETT. By Alice Curtayne. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1953. Pages vii, 239. Cloth, price $3.00.

THIS is an account drawn largely from official records, of the trial, condemnation and execution of Blessed Oliver Plunkett, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of Ireland in the year 1681. The Archbishop was a victim — the last, as it happened — of the infamous suspicions and hateful fears arising from the alleged "Popish Plot", hatched in the mind of Titus Oates, and fomented for political purposes by the Parliamentary enemies of King Charles II. In reading of this trial, which took place in Westminster Hall in London, the modern reader must of course make allowances for the different rules of procedure governing criminal trials in the Seventeenth Century from those in force today. But when all such allowances have been made, one cannot but conclude that Oliver Plunkett was the victim of prejudiced judges and of mob hysteria. The refusal to allow the Archibishop sufficient time to obtain defense witnesses from Ireland; the hearsay evidence admitted against him; and the fact that the principal witnesses for the prosecution were personal enemies of the prisoner (indeed priests who had been disciplined for their crimes); these proceedings are shocking to anyone who believes in justice, and that a man is to be regarded as innocent until he is proven guilty.

Throughout the entire proceedings the Archbishop conducted himself admirably, free from rancour, and with wonderful Christian

charity. When sentence was finally passed — the terrible sentence that he was to be hanged, drawn and quartered — he did not flinch. The night before his execution he slept as peacefully as a child.

It is perhaps difficult to claim, unreservedly, that the Archbishop was a martyr for his Faith. As in the case of so many of the victims of religious persecution, political motives operated, as well as religious ones. But that he was entirely innocent of the conspiracy of which he was charged there can be no doubt; and that he was a holy Bishop, and a brave and devout follower of our Lord there can be no doubt either.

We who live in modern Democratic countries may congratulate ourselves that trials like those of Oliver Plunkett cannot occur in our day and age. But, as the author reminds us in a prefatory note, very similar trials *are* occurring right now in countries behind the "Iron Curtain." Nor is it at all impossible that such things might not reoccur even in the "civilized West", if prejudices, fears, and mob hysteria are allowed to have full scope. For that reason we are grateful to the author for this absorbing and very timely book.

GRANVILLE M. WILLIAMS, S.S.J.E.

FROM CONFUCIUS TO CHRIST. By Paul K. T. Sih. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1952. Pages xvi, 231. Cloth, price $3.00.

THE FRUIT IN THE SEED. Chapters of Autobiography. By Margaret Leigh. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1952. Pages 128. Cloth, Price $2.00.

HERE are two biographies both dealing with the quest for God and for religion, and both ending in the Roman Catholic Church. The backgrounds of the authors are about as different as could be imagined. Dr. Paul Sih, who has been active in the Security Council of the United Nations, and is, at present a Professor and the Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies at Seton Hall University, New Jersey, is a Chinese; born near Shanghai into a well-to-do family; and, according to his own account, brought up without any religious background whatever. Margaret Leigh, an English novelist, now a Carmelite Nun, was the daughter of an Oxford don; and brought up by her parents in an atmosphere of Anglican piety, which, however, seems to have had little effect upon the growing child. Indeed, in later life, she became a complete Agnostic after a brief sojourn in the Society of Friends; and only after complete disillusionment, did she begin to grasp the elements of the Catholic faith.

In style and in content the books reveal these differing backgrounds of their authors. Dr. Sih writes in a disarmingly simple — indeed almost a naïve — style, of his childhood; the influence of his grandmother, who was a pious Buddhist; the part played by the writings of Confucius; his first contacts with Christianity, in the form of a rather grim Protestantism; his journey to Italy, with the opportunities thus afforded to learn something of Catholic Christianity; and his final reception into the Roman Catholic Church. The figure of Küan Yin, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, exercised a great fascination over the young boy's mind; and this made the cultus of the Blessed Virgin seem to him a vital and necessary part of the Christian Religion. As he writes, "Thus to a Chinese it is impossible to adore Christ without venerating the Blessed Virgin. How good God is to use my filial devotion to Küan Yin as an instrument for opening my eyes to see that *devotion to the Blessed Virgin is the touchstone of true Christianity!*" (p. 20.) (Italics are the author's own.)

Margaret Leigh's book is beautifully written, indeed it is a literary delight. As remarked above, her parents were practising Anglicans, in fact, her mother was a devout Anglo-Catholic, so it is really amazing to read that this religious atmosphere had so little effect on Margaret. It is true that she was confirmed in the Church of England, and apparently, for a time, made her Communions fairly regularly; but considering her background, it is puzzling to read, "I cannot remember what my theory of the Eucharist was or indeed whether I had any . . . It cannot have meant very much to me, or I would remember more clearly." (p. 54.) An interesting reference to the Church of the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Oxford occurs in this reference to her brief life as a practising Anglican: —

> "Every Sunday morning during my first term," (as a Student at Oxford) "I would cycle over Magdalen Bridge to the Cowley Fathers' Church in the Iffley Road. The members of this community, who followed an Anglican adaptation of the Rule of St. Benedict, were men of great personal holiness, and their church had an ascetic recollected beauty that is only too rarely found in" (Roman) "Catholic places of worship. The solemn Gregorian chant and slow, reverent reading of the English liturgy impressed me deeply. How often, when trying not to listen to the slipshod gabbling of the average low Mass, have I not wished myself back at Cowley! Let us keep our Latin liturgy, but let our priests recite it as carefully as they would if all the faithful knew Latin."

After these kind words, it is rather disconcerting to read the — perhaps inevitable — disparagement of the "Cowley monks" for

not being Roman Catholics! But perhaps Miss Leigh feared that she had gone too far in her praise of an Anglican Religious Community.

These two biographies have a common interest in showing how historic Christianity, and the Catholic Church can meet the needs and desires of disillusioned modern men and women.

GRANVILLE M. WILLIAMS, S.S.J.E.

THE INTERIOR CARMEL: THE THREEFOLD WAY OF LOVE. By John C. H. Wu, Obl. O.S.B., J.D. Sheed and Ward, New New York, 1953. Pages xi, 257. Cloth, price $3.25.

LET no one be "put off" from reading this really wonderful book on the spiritual life because its title might seem to indicate that it is designed only for those following a Contemplative vocation. Dr. Wu, who is a Chinese Roman Catholic, and who at one time represented China as Minister plenipotentiary to the Holy See, has given us a spiritual classic, as well adapted to the use of Christians living in the world as it will be helpful to members of strictly enclosed Religious Communities. A great deal of the charm of the book consists in the fact that though it is deeply Christian, it constantly draws on Confucian and other Chinese wisdom for illustrative material. Nor does Dr. Wu overlook the store house of spiritual treasure to be found in the writings of Western Catholic mystics, nor even quotations from modern Anglican writers on the spiritual life. For as he truly says, "The Church of Christ is a house of many mansions, but there is no mansion for provincialism."

The plan of the book is to follow the traditional three-fold way of the Life of the Spirit — the Purgative, the Illuminative, and the Unitive Ways — which are again subdivided into chapters dealing with the Eight Beatitudes. Everywhere the treatment is fresh and illuminating. The book will be invaluable for spiritual reading; and as a source for meditations, sermons, and retreat addresses.

Our grateful thanks to Dr. Wu for this extremely helpful book!

GRANVILLE M. WILLIAMS, S.S.J.E.

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